

## **Forest Service, Washington Office, Research and Development Staff Forestry Research Advisory Council**

### **MEMBERSHIP BALANCE PLAN**

#### **1. Committee's Official Designation**

Forestry Research Advisory Council (Council)

#### **2. Authority**

The Council is required by Section 1441 (c) of the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981, to provide advice to the Secretary of Agriculture on accomplishing efficiently the purposes of the act of October 10, 1962 (16 U.S.C. 582a, et seq.) commonly known as the McIntire-Stennis Act of 1962. The Council also provides advice related to the Forest Service research program, authorized by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978 (Pub. L. NO. 95-307, 92 Stat.353, as amended, 16 U.S.C., 1600 (note)).

The Council is being established in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. App. 2.

#### **3. Objectives and Scope of Activities**

The Council reports to the Secretary of Agriculture on regional and national planning and coordination of forestry research within the Federal and State agencies concerned with developing and utilizing the Nation's forest resources, forestry schools, and the forest industries. The Council also advises the Secretary of Agriculture on the apportionment of funds for the McIntire-Stennis Program.

#### **4. Points of View Needed for the Committee**

The Council will be comprised of 20 voting members approved by the Secretary of Agriculture. The Council membership will be fairly balanced in terms of the points of view represented and functions to be performed. Members are appointed for 3-year terms. Of these members, one will become the chairperson who is recognized for his or her ability to lead a group in a fair and focused manner and who has been briefed on the

mission of the Council. A co-chairperson may be assigned, especially to facilitate his or her transition to become chairperson in the future.

The Council members will represent a broad array of interests in forest research. They include a maximum of five representatives from each of the following categories:

- 1) Federal and State agencies concerned with developing and utilizing the Nation's forest resources, in particular committee membership will include representation from National Forest System and Forest and Range Experiment Stations Leaders, Forest Service;
- 2) The forest industries;
- 3) The forestry schools of the State-certified eligible institutions, and State agricultural experiment stations; and
- 4) Volunteer public groups concerned with forests and related natural resources.

Representation from these organizations will ensure a wide variety of viewpoints on issues and priorities related to forestry research and natural resource research and management matters across the United States.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the membership of this Committee is balanced geographically and among interest groups, nevertheless, USDA recognizes that committee membership is not static and may change, depending on the work of the committee.

## **5. Other Balance Factors**

Equal opportunity practices in accordance with USDA policies will be followed in all appointments to the Committee. To ensure that the recommendations of the Committee have taken into account the needs of the diverse groups served by USDA, membership will include to the extent possible, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women and persons with disabilities.

The USDA prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

**6. Quorum Requirements**

A simple majority of the appointed members of the Council must be present to constitute a quorum for an official meeting of the Council. The appointed members will provide consensus direction. Attendance may be in-person, by telephone or other electronic means.

**7. Candidate Identification Process**

Outreach for new members includes contacting organizations that consist of forestry and natural resource researchers, usually academic institutions, forest industry interest groups, and forestry and natural resource NGOs. Particular efforts are made to reach minority-serving institutions and tribal organizations to ensure ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity. The Designated Federal Official, in collaboration with the Forest Service Deputy Chief for R&D and Assistant Director of NIFA, determine a balanced spectrum of nominees is submitted to the Secretary for consideration in making appointments.

Once candidates have been identified, their names and background data are submitted to the USDA White House Liaison's office for vetting. The vetting process includes a background check to determine if any of the candidates have a conflict of interest that would prohibit them from serving on the committee due to criminal or ethical violations.

**8. Subcommittee Balance**

The Council has no subcommittees, and if the need arises, the same process for selecting subcommittee members would be followed as for appointment of Council members.

**9. Other**

N/A

**10. Date Prepared or Updated**

April 21, 2015